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ART. VIII. — *The New Timon, a Romance of London.*

First American from the Third London Edition. Philadelphia: Carey & Hart. 1846. 12mo. pp. 208.

FLETCHER of Saltoun's apothegm would hardly answer for our latitude ; song has no super-legislative force among us. The walls of one of our great political parties were thought to have risen from their ruins a few years ago, like those of Thebes, to the sound of singing ; but this Amphionic mason-work was found not to resist our changeful climate. Our national melodies are of African descent. If our brains be stolen, it will never be through our ears ; the Sirens had sung in vain to a Nantucket Ulysses. We remember a nomadic minstrel, a dweller in tents, who picked up a scanty subsistence by singing " Proud Dacre sailed the sea," and " The Hunters of Kentucky," on election days, and at Commencements and musters. But he was merely the satellite to a dwarf, and the want of the aspirate betrayed a Transatlantic origin. Moreover, only slender-witted persons were betrayed into the extravagance of the initiatory ninepence, the shrewder citizens contenting themselves with what gratuitous music leaked through the rents in the canvas.

Mr. Barlow, we believe, had a beatific vision of the nine immigrant Muses, somewhere on the top of the Alleghany mountains. A judicious selection of place ; — for only in some such inaccessible spot would they be safe from the constable. Without question, a ship's captain importing nine ladies with so scanty a wardrobe would be compelled to give bonds. With us the bard has no chartered sacredness ; cotton and the stocks refuse to budge at his vaticinations. The newspapers are our Westminster Abbey, in whose Poets' Corner the fugitive remains of our verse-makers slumber inviolate, — a sacred privacy, uninvaded save by the factory-girl or the seamstress. The price-current is our Paradise of Daintie Devyces ; and that necromancer, who might fill his pockets by contracting to bring back Captain Kidd to tell us where he buried treasure, would starve, were he to promise merely

" To call up him who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold."

It is not that we are an antipoetical people. Our sur-

veyors might fix that stigma upon us, by whose means Graylock becomes Saddle-mountain on the maps, and Tahconic is converted from his paganism, and undergoes baptism as Mount Everett. All the world'over, the poet is not what he was in ruder times. If he ever unite, as formerly, the bardic and sacerdotal offices, that conjunction forebodes nothing graver than the publication of a new hymn-book. The sanctity of the character is gone; the garret is no safer than the first-floor. Every dun and tipstaff sets at naught the precedent of the great Emathian conqueror. Poetry once concerned itself with the very staple of existence. Now it is a thing apart. The only time we were ever conscious that the Muse did still sometimes cast a halo round every-day life was when we heard the "Village Blacksmith" congratulating himself, that Longfellow had had his smithy "drawed as nateral as a picter."

Many respectable persons are greatly exercised in spirit at the slow growth of what they are pleased to call a national literature. They conjecture of the forms of our art from the shape of our continent, reversing the Platonic method. They deduce a literary from a geographical originality; a new country, therefore new thoughts. A *reductio ad absurdum* would carry this principle to the extent of conforming an author's mind to the house he lived in. These enthusiasts wonder, that our mountains have not yet brought forth a poet, forgetting that a mouse was the result of the only authentic mountainous parturition on record. Others, more hopeful, believe the continent to be at least seven months gone with a portentous minstrel, who, according to the most definite augury we have seen, shall "string" our woods, mountains, lakes, and rivers, and then "wring" from them (no milder term, or less suggestive of the laundry, will serve) notes of "autochthonic significance." We have heard of one author, who thinks it quite needless to be at the pains of a jury of matrons on the subject, as he makes no doubt that the child of Destiny is already born, and that he has discovered in himself the genuine *Terræ Filius*.

Never was there so much debate of a national literature as during the period immediately succeeding our Revolution, and never did the Titan of native song make such efforts to get himself born as then. Hopkinson, Freneau, Paine, and Barlow were the result of that travail. It was not the

fault of the country ; it was even newer then than now, and its shape (if that was to be effectual in the matter) was identical. Nor was zeal or pains wanting. It is believed that the "Conquest of Canaan" and the "Vision of Columbus" were read by authentic men and women. The same patriotism which refused the tea swallowed the poetry. The same hardy spirit, the same patient endurance, which brought the Pilgrims to Plymouth rock, was not yet gone out of the stock. A nation which had just gone through a seven years' war could undergo a great deal.

But we must come sooner or later to the conclusion, that literature knows no climatic distinctions of that external kind which are presupposed in this clamor for a national literature. The climate in which the mind of an author habitually dwells — whether it be that of Greece, Asia, Italy, Germany, or England — moulds the thought and the expression. But that which makes poetry poetry, and not prose, is the same everywhere. The curse of Babel fell not upon the Muse. Climate gives inexorable laws to architecture, and all importations from abroad are contraband of nature, sure to be satirized by whatever is native to the soil. There is but one sky of song, and the growth of the tropics will bear the open air of the pole. For man is the archetype of poetry. Its measure and proportion, as Vitruvius reports of the Doric pillar, are borrowed of him. Natural scenery has little hand in it, national peculiarities none at all. Not Simois or Scamander, but Helen, Priam, Andromache, give divinity to the tale of Troy. Dante's Italicism is his lame foot. Shakspeare would fare ill, were we to put him upon proof of his Englishry. So homogeneous is the structure of the mind, that Sir William Jones conceived Odin and Fo to be identical.

There is no fear but we shall have a national literature soon enough. Meanwhile, we may be sure that all attempts at the forcible manufacture of such a product (especially out of physical elements) will be as fruitless as the *opus magnum* of the alchemists. The cunning of man can only adroitly combine the materials lying ready to his hand. It has never yet compassed the creation of any seed, be it never so small. As a nation, we are yet too full of hurry and bustle. The perfectly balanced tree can grow only in the wind-bound shelter of the valley. Our national eagerness for immediate re-

sults infests our literature. We wish to taste the fruit of our culture, and as yet plant not that slower growth which ripens for posterity. The mental characteristic of the pioneer has become engrained in us, outliving the necessity which begot it. Everywhere the blackened stumps of the clearing jut out like rocks amid the yellow waves of our harvest. We have not learned to wait ; our chief aim is to produce, and we are more careful of quantity than quality. We cannot bring ourselves to pinch off a part of the green fruit, that the ripe may be more perfect. To be left behind is the opprobrium ; we desire an immediate effect. Hence, a large part of that mental energy, which would else find its natural bent in literary labor, turns to the lecture-room or the caucus, or mounts that ready-made rostrum of demagogues, the stump. If any man think he has an errand for the general ear, he runs at full speed with it, and delivers such fragments as he has breath left to utter. If we adopt a Coptic emblem, and paste it on the front of our pine-granite propylæa, it must have wings, implying speed. That symbol of wiser meaning, with finger upon lip, is not for us. We break our eggs, rather than await the antiquated process of incubation. We pull up what we have planted, to see if it have taken root. We fell the primeval forest, and thrust into the ground a row of bean-poles for shade. We cannot spare the time to sleep upon any thing ; we must be through by daylight. Our boys debate the tariff and the war. Scarce yet beyond the lacteal age, they leave hoop, and ball, and taw, to discuss the tea and coffee tax.

We find talking cheaper than writing, and both easier than thinking. We talk everlastingly ; our magazines are nothing but talk, and that of a flaccid and Polonian fibre. The Spartans banished the unfortunate man who boasted that he could talk all day. With us he had been sure of Congress or the Cabinet. No petty African king is fonder of palaver than the sovereign people. Our national bird is of no kin to the falcon of the Persian poet, whose taciturnity made him of more esteem than the nightingale. We are always in haste ; we build a railroad from the cradle to the grave. Our children cannot spare time to learn spelling ; they must take the short cut of phonography. In architecture, we cannot abide the slow teaching of the fitness of things ; we parody the sacred growth of ages with our inch-board fragilities,

"Their rafters sprouting on the shady side,"

and every village boasts its *papier-machè* cathedral. Our railroad-cars are our best effort in this kind yet, — the emblems of hurry. The magnetic telegraph is of our invention, a message upon which, travelling westward, outstrips Time himself. The national trait is aptly symbolized by a gentleman we know of, who has erected his own funeral monument (what a titbit for honest old Weever!) and inscribed upon it an epitaph of his own composing, leaving vacant only the date of his demise. This is to be beforehand with Death himself. We remember only the *occasio celeris* and not the *ars longa* of the adage. Hence a thousand sciolists for one scholar, a hundred improvisators for one poet. Every thing with us ripens so rapidly, that nothing of ours seems very old but our boys.

A sandy diffuseness of style among our speakers and writers is the result of this hurry. We try to grasp a substantial handful here and there, and it runs through our fingers. How our legislators contrive to sit out each other's speeches we could never conceive. Who reads those interminable debates is a question of harder solution than what song the Sirens sang. In our callower years, we sit down beside them, like the clown at the river's edge. But we soon learn the *labitur et labetur*. Providence, which has made nothing that is not food for something else, has doubtless so constituted some systems as that they can devour and digest these. The constituency of Buncombe, if it find time to read all that is addressed to it, must be endowed with an unmatched longevity. It must be a community of oldest inhabitants. Yet, with all this tendency to prosing, we love concentration, epigrammatic brevity, antithesis. Hence the potency of phrases among us; a nimble phrase in a trice trips up our judgment; "masterly inactivity," "conquering a peace," "our country right or wrong," and the like. Talleyrand's plan for settling the Restoration on a firm basis would have done for us: — "C'est bien, c'est très bien, et tout ce qu'il faut maintenant, ce sont les feux d'artifice *et un bon mot pour le peuple*."

Under such circumstances, we need hardly expect a sudden crop of epics. We must have something that we can bolt. And we need not trouble ourselves about the form or the growth of our literature. The law of demand and supply

is as inexorable here as in every thing else. The forcing system, we may be sure, is out of place. Art cannot make heartwood under glass. Above all, let not our young authors be seduced into the belief, that there can be any nationality in the great leading ideas of art. The mind has one shape in the Esquimaux and the Anglo-Saxon, and that shape it will strive to impress on its creations. If we evaporate all that is watery, and the mere work of absorption, in the mythologies and early histories of the different races of men, we shall find one invariable residuum at bottom. The legendary age of Greece may find a parallel in our own recent history, and "Old Put," the wolf-killer, at whose door all the unfathered *derring-does* of the time are laid, is no mean Yankee translation of Theseus. Doubtless, a freer and more untrammelled spirit will be the general characteristic of our literature, and it is to be hoped that it will get its form and pressure before our social life begins (as it inevitably must) to fence itself from the approaches of license behind a stricter and more rigid conventionality. Where external distinctions are wanting, men intrench themselves the more deeply in forms. When this reaction makes itself felt in our literature, let us hope to find the works of our authors as conscientious in finish, as they should be bold in design and outline. As for expecting that our mountains and lakes and forests should inoculate our literature with their idiosyncrasies, we may as reasonably look to find the mental results of our corduroy roads there, a speculation which might confirm itself by certain metres we have lately been favored with by our poets. The "surface of the country," of which we used to read so much in our geographies, never made and never marred a poet. There are mountains as good as Chimborazo and Popocatepetl in the poet's mind. Were Skiddaw and Ben Lomond the lay-figures from which Bunyan painted his Delectable Mountains? Or was the dead marsh-level of parts of the Excursion an infection from those hills among which Wordsworth has spent his life? Shakspeare had done better than travel in Egypt when he said, —

"Ye pyramids, built up with newer might,
To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;
Ye are but dressings of a former sight."

Hitherto our literature has been chiefly imitative and artificial; we have found no better names for our authors than the

American Scott, the American Mrs. Hemans, the American Wordsworth. There is nothing to fear from too great license as yet. At present, every English author can see a distorted reflection of himself here, — a something like the eidolons of the Homeric Hades, not ghosts precisely, but unsubstantial counterparts. He finds himself come round again, the Atlantic Ocean taking the function of the Platonic year. Our authors are the best critics of their brethren (or parents) on the other side of the water, catching as they do only what is exaggerated in them. We are in need of a literary declaration of independence ; our literature should no longer be colonial.

Let us not be understood as chiming in with that foolish cry of the day, that authors should not profit by example and precedent, — a cry which generally originates with some hardy imitator, the “stop thief!” with which he would fain distract attention from himself. It is the tower-stamp of an original mind, that it gives an awakening impulse to other original minds. Memory was the mother of the Muses. Montaigne says, “In my country, when they would decipher a man that has no sense, they say such a one has no memory.” But to imitate the works of another is not to profit by them. It is making them our dungeon. It is better to smell of the lamp than of the library. Yet the most original writers have begun in some sort as imitators, and necessarily so. They must first learn to speak by watching the lips and practising the tones of others. This once acquired, the native force within masters and moulds the instrument. Shakespeare’s early poems have the trick and accent of Spenser. Milton’s *Comus* was written with a quill from the Swan of Avon’s wing, dipped in Jonson’s ink. But even the imitations of an original mind give no small oracle of originality. The copyist mimics mannerisms only. Like Crashaw’s minstrel,

“From this to that, from that to this, he flies.”

The original mind is always consistent with itself. Michel Angelo, cramped by the peculiar shape of a piece of marble which another sculptor had roughed out for a conception of his own, conquered something characteristic out of that very restraint, and the finished statue proclaimed its author. The poet, like the sculptor, works in one material, and there, in the

formless quarry of the language, lie the divine shapes of gods and heroes awaiting the master's evocation.

The republication of a poem which has made a sensation in England is not without its importance to us. We read of an ancient nation who, every New Year, made clean hearths, and then rekindled them with fire sent round by their king for that end. A rite not unlike this in form, though widely different in meaning, is still maintained by many of our authors. So soon as a new light makes its appearance in England, every native rushlight is ceremoniously extinguished, and the smoking wick set once more ablaze by the stolen touch of that more prosperous foreign flame. From the avatar of this Christmas we cannot remotely conjecture in what shape an author shall choose to appear at the next. But the book, which we have made the text of our somewhat erratic discourse, is not only worthy of notice, inasmuch as it may serve as a model, but still more from its own intrinsic merits, and because it is a strong protest against the form and spirit of the poetry now in vogue. It once more unburies the hatchet of the ancient feud between what are called the "natural" and "artificial" schools.

The dispute in this case, as in most others, has concerned itself chiefly about words. An exact definition of the terms used by the contending parties would have been the best flag of truce. Grant the claims of the disciples of Pope, and you blot out at once the writings of the greatest poets that ever lived. Grant those of the opposite party, and you deny to Pope any merit whatever. The cardinal point of the whole quarrel lies in the meaning attached to the single word *poet*. The most potent champion of *Poetry* in our day gave by his practice the direct lie to his assumed theory. The Age of Bronze, the only poem which he wrote professedly upon this model, is unreadable from sheer dullness. His prose letters in the Bowles controversy were far more in Pope's vein and spirit.

The author of the New Timon avows himself a follower of Pope. We shall by-and-by have occasion to try him by his own standard. In the mean time, we shall barely remark, that his allusions to Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Keats are presumptuous and in bad taste. The fact that he misspells the name of one of these poets argues either a very petty affectation, or a shameful unfamiliarity with what he pretends to criticize.

The truth is, that Pope's merit lies in the concinnity and transparency of his style. It is this, rather than the sentiment, which charms. Thousands of readers find no want of orthodoxy in the *Essay on Man*, who would recoil in horror from the rough draught of Bolingbroke, on which it was based. Fancy, purity of diction, conciseness, unfailing wit, all these are Pope's, and they have given him immortality. But these are not essentially the attributes of a poet. In imagination, the crowning faculty of the poet, nay, the one quality which emphatically distinguishes him as such, Pope is wanting. A single example of the pure exercise of this faculty is not to be found in his works.

A profusion of ignorance and bad temper have been lavished on this topic. Had the controversy been understandingly carried on, there would have been no occasion for ill-feeling. One chief blunder has been the defining of authors as belonging to a certain school because they happened to be addicted to the use of a measure consisting of a certain number of feet, yet not the less variable on that account. Dryden, Pope, and Goldsmith are commonly named together, — authors as dissimilar as Chaucer and Racine. Crabbe, Campbell, and Rogers have all three used the same measure, yet are wholly unlike each other and unlike their three predecessors above named. Byron, who also used the "English Heroic" (as it is commonly called) in the *Corsair* and some other poems, presents still another totally distinct variety.

What, then, is the secret of that predilection in the minds of many to that kind of writing which is rather vaguely defined to be "of the Pope school"? Many, no doubt, adhere to it on the ground of its age and respectability, — a prejudice which Pope himself has admirably satirized. Others commend it on the score of its being easily comprehensible. Others again are charmed with what they esteem the grace, precision, and finish of its metre.

It is unquestionably the prime merit of style, that it conveys the author's ideas exactly and clearly. But after all, the ideas to be conveyed are of more importance than the vehicle, and it is one thing to see distinctly what they are, and another to comprehend them. Undoubtedly the first requisite is that they be worth comprehending. Once establish the principle, that easiness of comprehension is the chief

merit in literature, and the lowest order of minds will legislate for the exercise of that faculty which should give law to the highest. Every new book would come to us with the ambiguous compliment, that it was adapted to the meanest capacity. We have never been able to appreciate with any tolerable distinctness the grounds of that complacent superiority implied in the confession of not being able to understand an author, though we have frequently seen airs assumed on the strength of that acknowledged incapacity. One has a vision of the lame, halt, and blind dropping compassionate foppishnesses into the hats of their unmutated fellow-citizens. Apelles judged rightly in pronouncing Alexander's horse a better critic than his master. The equine was more liberal than the imperial appreciation.

The merit of Pope is wholly of the intellect. There is nothing in him of that finer instinct which characterizes all those who, by universal consent, have been allowed as great poets, and have received the laurel from posterity. His instinct is rather that of a man of taste than of genius. In reading Shakspeare, we do not concern ourselves as to the particular shape which his thoughts assume. That is wholly a secondary affair. We should as soon think of criticizing the peculiar form of a tree or a fern. Though we may not be able to codify the law which governs them, we cannot escape a feeling of the harmony and fitness resulting from an obedience to that law. There is a necessity for their being of that precise mould, and no other, which peremptorily overrules all cavil. With Pope, on the contrary, the form is what first demands notice. It is here that the poet has put forth his power and displayed his skill. He makes verses by a voluntary exercise of the intellect, rather than from the overflow of the creative power. We feel that he had his choice between several forms of expression, and was not necessarily constrained to the one he has selected. His verses please us, as any display of mental skill and vigor never fails to do. The pleasure he gives us is precisely similar to that we derive from reading the *Spectator*, and is in both cases the result of identical causes. His apothegms are wholly of the intellect, and that, too, of the intellect applied to the analysis of artificial life. He does not, according to Bacon's definition of poetry, "conform the shows of things to the desires of the soul." Yet he dwells in the

shows of things rather than in the substances, and conforms them, sometimes despotically, to the necessities of his satire. He jeers and flouts the artificial life which he sees. He mocks at it, as Lucian derided Zeus, — an atheist to the gods of the day, with no settled belief in any higher gods. He does not confute the artificial by comparison with any abiding real. He impales all contemporary littlenesses upon the sharp needles of his wit, and in his poems, as in an entomological cabinet, we see preserved all the ugly insects of his day. He does not tacitly rebuke meanness by looking over it to the image of a perennial magnanimity. He does not say sternly, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" but mischievously affixes a stinging epigram to horns, hoof, and tail, and sends Beelzebub away ridiculous. His inkstand was his arsenal, but it was not his to use it in Luther's hearty cataclysmic fashion.

We do not so much commend the *New Timon*, then, as being a return to purer models, but as a protest against the excesses into which the prevailing school had degenerated. Latterly, poetry seems to have deserted the strong and palpable motions of the common heart, and to have devoted itself to the ecstatic exploration of solitary nerves, — the less tangible, the better. The broad view attainable from those two peaks of Parnassus, which Sir John Denham sensibly defined to be "Nature and Skill," seems to be wellnigh neglected. Our young poets, instead of that healthy glow of cheek earned only by conversation with the robust air of the summit, and the labor incident to the rugged ascent, seem to value themselves upon their paleness, and to think him the better man who has spent most time in peering dizzily down the dark rifts and chasms round the base of the mountain, or in gazing into the potential millstones of its solid rock. The frailer the tissue of the feeling, the greater the merit in tracing it to its extremes, — a spiderlike accomplishment at best. Their philosophy (if we call that so which they esteem as such, and which is certainly nothing else) stands in grave need of Philotas's leaden soles. One might almost expect to see them blown out of existence by the incautious puffs of their own publisher or clique. The farther the poet can put himself out of the common, the more admirable is he. The reflections of Perillus in his bull, of Regulus in his hogshead, or of Clarence in his malmsey-butt, would furnish

an ample stock in trade to any young poet. Or a nearer approach to nature and the interests of every-day life might be found in the situation of Terence McHugh, buried alive at the bottom of a well, and so finding it to be the residence of at least one unquestionable verity.

Mystery, too, has become a great staple with our poets. Every thing must be accounted for by something more unaccountable. Grandgousier's simple and pious theory to explain the goodliness of Friar John's nose would hardly pass muster now. The "mystery of our being" has become a favorite object of contemplation. Egoism has been erected into a system of theology. Self has been deified like the Egyptian onion, —

"Nascuntur in hortis
Numina."

Poets used to look before and after. Now, their eyes are turned wholly inward, and ordinarily with as useful result as was attained by the Brahmin who spent five years in the beatific inspection of his own navel. Instead of poems, we have lectures on the morbid anatomy of self. Nature herself must subscribe their platform of doctrine, and that not "for substance, scope, and aim," but without qualification. If they turn their eyes outward for a moment, they behold in the landscape only a smaller image of themselves. The mountain becomes a granite Mr. Smith, and the ocean (leaving out the salt) a watery Mr. Brown, — in other words a Mr. Brown with the milky particles of his composition deducted. A new *systema mundi* is constructed, with the individual idiosyncrasy of the poet for its base. And, to prolong the delight of swallowing all this sublime mystification, enraptured simplicity prays fervently, with the old epicure, for the neck of a crane. Fortunately, that of a goose will suffice.

Nor has our mother tongue been safe from the experimental incursions of these philosophers. They have plunged so deeply into the well of English undefiled as to bring up the mud from the bottom. This they call "Saxon," and infuse portions of it into their productions, deepening the turbid obscurity. Strange virtues have been discovered in compound words, and the greater the incongruity of the mixture, the more potent the conjuration. Phrases, simple or unmeaning enough in themselves, acquire force and become

mystical by repetition, like the three *Iods* of the Cabalists, or the *Κόγξ Ὀμπαξ* of the Eleusinian mysteries. Straightforwardness has become a prose virtue. The poet wanders about his subject, looks for it where he knows it is not, and avoids looking where he knows it is, like a child playing at hide-and-seek, who, to lengthen the pleasure of the hunt, peeps cautiously into keyholes and every other impossible place, leaving to the last the table, under which lurks, with ostrich-like obviousness, the object of his search. It had been fortunate for Columbus, could he have recruited his crews with such minstrels, whose only mutiny would have been at the finding of the expected continent. We have seen the translation of a Hindoo deed which affords an exact parallel to such poetry. It begins with a general history of India, diverges into a system of theology, exhausts all the grantor's knowledge of natural history and astronomy, relates a few fables on different subjects, throws in a confused mass of compound words (one of them containing one hundred and fifty-two syllables), and finally reveals the object of this ponderous legal machine in a postscript of six lines conveying an acre or two of land.

The New Timon, if not the exact reverse of all this, is at least a resolute attempt in the opposite direction. We do not believe it possible to revive the style of Pope. It was a true mirror of its own age, but it would imperfectly reflect ours. Its very truth then would make it false now. The *petere fontes* points to other springs than these. Much less do we believe in confining literature to the strait channel of any one period. That is surely a very jejune kind of conservatism, which, with the Athenian Ephorus, would cut every new string added to the lyre. The critics have too often assumed the office of Ephorus in our commonwealth of letters, and have unfortunately become impressed with the notion, that this chordisection is the chief part of their official duty. As Selden said that equity was measured by the length of my Lord Chancellor's foot for the time being, so has judgment in these cases been too often meted, if not by the length, at least by the susceptibility, of my Lord Ephorus's ear. If every Phrynio had been thus dealt with, the lyre would never have lost that pristine simplicity and compactness, and that facility at making itself understood, which characterized it when it was a plain tortoise-shell, ere

idle Hermes had embarrassed and perplexed it with a single string.

The author is a professed disciple of Pope, but he is wanting in the vivid common-sense, the crystal terseness, and the epigrammatic point of his original. Moreover, he is something of a "snob." His foundling Lucy must turn out to be an earl's daughter; his Hindoo Timon must be a nabob. It is clear that he reverences those very artificial distinctions which he professes to scorn. So much contempt could not be lavished on what was insignificant. Himself the child of a highly artificial state of society, there seems to be something unfilial and against nature in his assaults upon it. His *New Timon* is made a Timon by the very things which he affects to despise. Pope was quite superior to so subaltern a feeling.

The plot of the story is not much to our taste. Morvale, the hero, is the son of a half-Hindoo father and an English mother. The mother, left a widow,

"Loathed the dark pledge the abhorred nuptials bore;
Yet young, her face more genial wedlock won,
And one bright daughter made more loathed the son.
Widowed anew, for London's native air
And two tall footmen sighed the jointured fair;
Wealth hers, why longer from its use exiled?
She fled the land and the abandoned child." — p. 21.

In the mean while, a rich friend of Morvale's father opportunely dies, leaving his immense wealth to the son. This self-devotion on the part of the very rich is happily universal in the Utopia of the novel and the melodrama. We are thus introduced to Mr. Morvale.

"They sought and found the unsuspecting heir
Couched in the shade that neared the tiger's lair,
His gun beside, the jungle round him, — wild,
Lawless, and fierce as Hagar's wandering child: —
To this fresh nature the sleek life deceased
Left the bright plunder of the ravaged East.
Much wealth brings want, — that hunger of the heart
Which comes when Nature man deserts for Art:
His northern blood, his English name, create
Strife in the soul till then resigned to fate;
The social world, with blander falsehood graced,
Smiles on his hopes and lures him from the waste.

Alas! the taint that sunburnt brow bespeaks
 Divides the Half-Caste from the world he seeks ;
 In him proud Europe sees the Paria's birth,
 And haughty Juno spurns his barren hearth.
 Half heathen and half savage, — all estranged
 Amidst his kind, the Ishmael roved unchanged." — pp. 22, 23.

We do not profess to be in Juno's confidence, but, unless she is greatly belied, she is not in the habit of examining closely the complexion of a millionaire. Wealth produces a marvellous change in Morvale, at least. He now travels, converses much with books and men, drinks life at once to the dregs (the favorite beverage of heroes), and becomes one of those profoundly learned men of the world, more familiar to the patrons of circulating libraries than to any other class in society. These singular beings are the antitheses of ordinary natures. They are incarnate contradictions. Fire and gunpowder in them meet on amicable terms. A liberal course of dissipation fulfils more than the functions of a university. In the society of *opera-girls*, they learn to be fastidious in women ; in that of *roués*, they exhaust the arts and sciences. We do not say that Morvale is precisely one of these, but we have hints, every here and there, of something like it. We would only warn him from ground sacred to Madame Tussaud and the melodrama.

Morvale, having run round the elevated circle of the passions, subsides to a less heroic, but much more respectable, stratum of existence. His feelings as a son and brother revive. He accordingly, we are told, "*searched* his mother," a perilous infringement of orthoëpy, or of the rights of the subject, if done without a justice's warrant. He does not find her, however, she being probably one of those highly artificial characters who never carry themselves about with them. She avoids him

"Till Death approached, and Conscience, that sad star,
 That heralds night, and plays but on the bar
 Of the Eternal Gate, — laid bare the crime."

She leaves her daughter Calantha to his fraternal care. The brother and sister go to housekeeping together in the magnificent isolation of London. But though there is enough affection, there is little confidence, between them. A secret melancholy, the origin of which Morvale tries in vain to dis-

cover, preys upon the spirits of Calantha, — the old “worm i’ the bud.” Morvale, in one of his walks, encounters an orphan, Lucy, whom he brings home with him, and makes an inmate of his house, where, in good time, a passion springs up between them.

One of Morvale’s friends — and it is a little singular, that notwithstanding the barrier of his Hindoo blood, he moves in the most fashionable society — is Lord Arden, a *blasé* like himself, who one day, while they are riding together, relates his own history. Whatever fault we may find with our author’s plot, we cannot but approve his method of unfolding it. He tells his stories admirably, and interests us in spite of ourselves. But we must be careful that this does not interfere with our judgment of him as a poet. An author may be a very good story-teller, and a very bad poet. The character of Arden is well conceived. Indeed, it is by far the best in the book. The story had been truer to nature, if he, who had been through life brought into contact with the hollow-nesses of society, had become the Timon instead of Morvale. A man of the world, and selfish (if we may say so) rather on æsthetic grounds than by nature, he falls in love, while yet quite young, with Mary, the daughter of a poor country curate. Arden is one of the presumptive heirs to an earldom, the present earl being his uncle, and a cunning Scot has barnacled himself to the prosperous ship of his fortunes. Through him, Arden contrives an elopement and clandestine marriage. The Scot, however, knowing that Arden’s uncle, the earl, looked upon a wife as merely one round in the ladder of preferment, and would infallibly withdraw his patronage, if he discovered such a mark of unthrift in his nephew as disinterested love, has the ceremony performed by a mock priest. Mary’s father, finding the marriage to be a sham, dies broken-hearted, and Mary herself, compelled to believe herself betrayed, leaves her home and wanders no one knows whither. Arden, meanwhile, ignorant of all this, has gone on a foreign embassy. On his return, he becomes aware of the deceit practised upon him in regard to the marriage, but seeks Mary in vain. After the lapse of some years, he meets a lady in Italy, to whom he becomes betrothed. The day for the wedding is already fixed, when he receives letters from England, giving a hope that Mary’s hiding-place may be found. Leaving his betrothed with a

hasty and unintelligible explanation, he hastens home, where his search is again unsuccessful. So far Arden is his own biographer.

After a time, Morvale, by means of a miniature worn by Lucy, discovers that she is the daughter of Arden and Mary. He is about to send for Arden to inform him of this fact, when he makes the additional discovery, that Calantha is the nameless lady to whom his friend had been betrothed in Italy, and that his desertion of her was the occasion of that profound melancholy which was gradually killing her. He sends for Arden, and receives him by the death-bed of Calantha. His Indian nature thirsts for revenge, and, after making known his last discovery to the man whom he now considers his deadliest foe, draws a dagger, but is arrested in the act of striking by the entrance of Lucy, who throws herself between them. The relationship between Lucy and Arden is revealed, and she goes home with her father. Morvale, still struggling with his savage thirst for vengeance, wanders over the country on foot, and at last meets with an old man who converts him to Christianity. A chance occurring, he saves Arden from drowning, but leaves him before he has recovered his consciousness, though not before he has been seen and recognized by Lucy. Arden at length dies. By an informality in his will, Lucy is disinherited, and at this juncture Morvale returns in season to have the story end canonically with a wedding.

Our brief sketch does no kind of justice, of course, to the narrative skill of the author, which is, we are inclined to think, his strong point. But the comparative anatomist will see at a glance, that the skeleton is in many parts inconsistent with itself. Even granting (a large concession), that the hereditary savage in Morvale should have withstood all the refining influences of a high artificial culture, and the Mephistophelic polish acquired by attrition with the world, there is still a geographical blunder in the character. It is far less in accordance with what we know of the mild nature of the Hindoo, than with the less tractable idiosyncrasy of our American Indian, which takes the color of the white man's civilization only as a paint through which the Maker's original red shows itself at the first opportunity. But after making this allowance, we feel that the author has not used the character to the best advantage. This fresh, unfettered nature might have been brought into fine contrast with Arden, the artificial

product of the club and the saloon. Indeed, this seems to have been the author's original design, but in point of fact there is little substantial difference between the two characters as they are exhibited to us in the narrative, and they might change places without any great shock to the reader's sense of fitness.* Our author *makes up* his characters. His mind is not of that creative quality which holds the elements of different characters, as it were, in solution, allowing each to absorb only that which is congenial to itself, by a kind of elective affinity. The only savage propensity of Morvale's nature which is brought to bear upon the story is the sentiment of revenge, and for this the motive is not sufficient. Why should Morvale wish, or how could he expect, that Arden should have committed what would have been at least moral bigamy by marrying Calantha? If not, what injury was there to avenge? The story, in fact, ends with Arden's discovery of his daughter; the whole of Morvale's conduct after this event seems to be an unnatural excrescence. The author may plead that he intended to convey a moral; but the moral of a story should always be infused into it, or rather should exhale out of every part of it, like the odor of a flower. It is but an incumbrance, when wafered on. Besides, the means by which he manages the conversion of his hero are ludicrously insufficient to the end. If Horace's rule be true, that a god must not be brought in unless the knot refuses to be unloosed by simpler means, then it follows, *a fortiori*, that, when brought, the god should be competent to the task in hand. It is absurd that Morvale, after holding out so long against more natural inducements, should be converted at last by a very prosy sermon from an old man whom he meets under a hedge, and whom he would have been much more likely to consider a bore than an apostle. The author should have remembered his master Pope's criticism upon Milton. It would have been much more to the purpose, had Morvale been regenerated by his love for Lucy. As the *dénouement* is managed, we feel very much as when we first discovered that the red man of our boyish

* In his tragedy of "Luria," Mr. Browning has finely worked out an idea similar in kind, though with tragic, and not satirical, contrast. We are glad to recognize in the last work of this very promising dramatist a more assured touch, and a chastened, though by no means diminished, vigor and originality.

imagination, the one hero of Cooper under a dozen aliases,

“The stoic of the woods, the man without a tear,”

was powerless to resist the persuasion of a string of glass beads.

We will now proceed to extract some of the passages which have struck us most favorably in reading the book, and which give a fair idea of the author's manner and spirit. In the first part of the poem there are a few sketches of well-known public characters, which, as they are complete in themselves, and have no connection with the story, we will quote first. They do not assume to be complete full-lengths, but must be understood as hit off with a pencil on the crown of a hat. We omit that of Sir Robert Peel, who seems to have puzzled our author, and come to the Duke of Wellington.

“Next, with loose rein and careless canter view
Our man of men, the Prince of Waterloo ;
O'er the firm brow the hat as firmly prest,
The firm shape rigid in the button'd vest ;
Within — the iron which the fire has proved,
And the close Sparta of a mind unmoved !
Not his the wealth to some large natures lent,
Divinely lavish, even where misspent,
That liberal sunshine of exuberant soul,
Thought, sense, affection, warming up the whole ;
The heat and affluence of a genial power,
Rank in the weed as vivid in the flower ;
Hush'd at command his veriest passions halt,
Drill'd is each virtue, disciplined each fault ;
Warm if his blood — he reasons while he glows,
Admits the pleasure — ne'er the folly knows ;
If for our Mars his snare had Vulcan set,
He had won the Venus, but escaped the net ;
His eye ne'er wrong if circumscribed the sight,
Widen the prospect and it ne'er is right,
Seen through the telescope of habit still,
States seem a camp, and all the world — a drill !”
— pp. 34, 35.

O'Connell next passes across our magic-lantern.

“But who, scarce less by every gazer eyed,
Walks yonder, swinging with a stalwart stride ?
With that vast bulk of chest and limb assign'd
So oft to men who subjugate their kind ;

So sturdy Cromwell push'd broad-shoulder'd on ;
 So burly Luther breasted Babylon ;
 So brawny Cleon bawl'd his Agora down ;
 And large-limb'd Mahmoud clutch'd a Prophet's crown !

“ Ay, mark him well ! the schemer's subtle eye,
 The stage-mime's plastic lip your search defy —
 He, like Lysander, never deems it sin
 To eke the lion's with the fox's skin ;
 Vain every mesh this Proteus to enthrall,
 He breaks no statute, and he creeps through all ;
 First to the mass that valiant truth to tell,
 ‘ Rebellion's art is never to rebel, —
 Elude all danger, but defy all laws,’ —
 He stands himself the Safe Sublime he draws !
 In him behold all contrasts which belong
 To minds abased, but passions rous'd, by wrong ;
 The blood all fervor, and the brain all guile, —
 The patriot's bluntness, and the bondsman's wile.”

— pp. 36, 37.

The drawing of the present premier is still more happily touched.

“ Next cool, and all unconscious of reproach,
 Comes the calm ‘ Johnny who upset the coach.’
 How formed to lead, if not too proud to please, —
 His fame would fire you, but his manners freeze.
 Like or dislike, he does not care a jot ;
 He wants your vote, but your affections not ;
 Yet human hearts need sun, as well as oats, —
 So cold a climate plays the deuce with votes. —
 And while its doctrines ripen day by day,
 His frost-nipp'd party pines itself away ; —
 From the starved wretch its own loved child we steal —
 And ‘ Free Trade ’ chirrup on the lap of Peel ! —
 But see our statesman when the steam is on,
 And languid Johnny glows to glorious John !
 When Hampden's thought, by Falkland's muses drest,
 Lights the pale cheek, and swells the generous breast ;
 When the pent heat expands the quickening soul, —
 And foremost in the race the wheels of genius roll ! ”

— pp. 38, 39.

It is impossible to do justice to the narrative parts of the poem by means of detached passages. We shall glean a descriptive passage here and there, as a fairer course toward the

author, these being at least complete in themselves. The following verses, conveying the feelings suggested by night in London, are striking.

“The Hours steal on — and o’er the unquiet might
Of the great Babel — reigns, dishallowed, Night!
Not, as o’er Nature’s world, She comes, to keep
Beneath the stars her solemn tryst with Sleep,
When move the twin-born Genii side by side,
And steal from earth its demons where they glide;
Lull’d the spent Toil — seal’d Sorrow’s heavy eyes,
And dreams restore the dews of Paradise;
But Night, discrown’d and sever’d from her twin,
No pause for Travail, no repose for Sin,
Vex’d by one chafed rebellion to her sway,
Flits o’er the lamp-lit streets — a phantom-day!” — p. 141.

Here are a pair of out-of-doors scenes. The first is contained in a very few lines, but it is natural and touching. Arden has returned to England, and is seeking Mary at her old home.

“Behold her home once more!
Her home! a desert! — still, though rank and wild,
On the rank grass the heedless floweret smiled;
Still by the porch you heard the ungrateful bee,
Still brawled the brooklet’s unremembering glee.” — p. 92.

The other is an autumnal landscape. But it must be observed that the author never paints directly from nature, but from the reflection of her in his own mind.

“Now Autumn closes on the fading year,
The chill wind moaneth through the woodlands sere;
At morn the mists lie mournful on the hill, —
The hum of summer’s populace is still!
Hush’d the rife herbage, mute the choral tree,
The blithe cicala, and the murmuring bee;
The plashing reed, the furrow on the glass
Of the calm wave, as by the bank you pass
Scaring the glistening trout, — delight no more;
The god of fields is dead — Pan’s lusty reign is o’er!
Solemn and earnest — yet to holier eyes
Not void of glory, arch the sober’d skies
Above the serious earth! — e’en as the age
When fades the sunlight from the poet’s page,
When all Creation is no longer rife,

As Jove's lost creed, with deity and life —
 And where Apollo hymn'd, where Venus smil'd ;
 Where laugh'd from every rose the Paphian child ;
 Where in each wave the wanton nymph was seen ;
 Where in each moonbeam shone Endymion's queen ;
 Where in each laurel, from the eternal bough
 Daphne wreathed chaplets for a dreamy brow ;
 To the wreck'd thrones of the departed creeds
 A solemn Faith, a lonely God succeeds ;
 And o'er the heathen altars of our youth,
 Reigns, 'mid a silence disenchanted, — Truth ! ”

— pp. 178, 179.

The following night-scene is perhaps the best of its kind in the whole book. The images are all in keeping (a rare thing with our author), and the expression, especially in the verse we have *Italicized*, condensed and energetic.

“ 'Tis night, — a night by fits, now foul, now fair,
 As speed the cloud-wracks through the gusty air :
 At times the wild blast dies — and fair and far,
 Through chasms of cloud, looks down the solemn star —
 Or the majestic moon ; — as watchfires mark
Some sleeping War dim-tented in the dark ;
 Or as, through antique Chaos and the storm
 Of Matter, whirl'd and writhing into form
 Pale angels peer'd !

“ Anon, from brief repose
 The winds leap forth, the cloven deeps reclose ;
 Mass upon mass the hurtling vapors driven,
 And one huge blackness walls the earth from heaven ! ”

— p. 189.

As we said above, narrative seems the author's true sphere. His reflections are often commonplace, sometimes puerile, and display more knowledge of society than of man. Often a thought slender in itself is invested with a burly air by means of initial capitals. But when he has a story to tell, he is in his native element. He never flags, his versification becomes bolder and more sustained, the transitions are rapid and fluent, and incident follows incident without confusion and with a culminating interest.

The author of the *New Timon* might have studied Pope to more purpose than he has done. He is often exceedingly obscure. *Brevis esse laborat, obscurus fit*. There are pas-

sages in the poem which have defied our utmost capacity of penetration. Nor is his use of language always correct. His metaphors are frequently confused, as, for instance, on page 154 : —

“ From the way-side yon drooping flower I bore ;
Warm'd at my heart, its root grew to the core.”

A new method of reviving wilted plants. As a metrist he has departed widely from his professed original. In this respect he has done wisely, for Pope's measure is quite too uniform for the abrupt changes and varying inflections of a narrative. But too often he weakens a verse by a repetition of trivial monosyllables ; as,

“ Wept tears that seemed *to* sweet founts *to* belong.” — p. 28.

“ Thou com'st *to* slaughter, *to* depart in joy.” — p. 154.

Or by a word not strongly or decidedly enough accented ; as,

“ Not *even* yet the alien blood confessed.” — p. 128.

“ Lists the soft lapse of the glad waterfall.” — p. 163.

We object, also, to his mode of using the Alexandrine as too abrupt. The metre should flow into it with a more gradual and easy swell. One of our own countrymen, Dr. Holmes, has a much surer mastery over this trying measure. We think the subject of metre one to be studied deeply by all who undertake to write in verse. We cannot quite agree with old Samuel Daniel, who, in his noble “ Defense of Rime,” asserts that “ whatsoever form of words doth move, delight, and sway the affections of men, in what Scythian sort soever it be disposed or uttered, that is true number, measure, eloquence, and the perfection of speech.” No doubt, the effect produced is the chief point ; but in truth, the best utterances of the best minds have never been Scythian, coming to us rather “ with their garlands and singing-robcs about them.”

In conclusion, we should say that vivacity, rather than strength, was the characteristic of our author ; that rapidity of action, rather than depth or originality, was the leading trait of his mind. In his contempt of Laura-Matildaism, he sometimes carries his notions of manliness to an extreme which would be more offensive, were it not altogether absurd. He says, for example, that

“ Eyen in a love-song man should write for men ! ” — p. 50.

Imagine the author of the New Timon serenading Lord Stanley, who seems to be an object of his admiration, with "Sleep, gentleman, sleep!" It follows, as a matter of course, that his female characters (the simplest test of a creative poetic genius) are mere shadows.

If we might hazard a guess, we should name Bulwer as the probable author of this poem. It seems hardly possible that it should be the first production of a young writer. The skillfulness with which the plot is constructed, perfection in which is perhaps the slowest attainment of writers of fiction, seems to argue against such a supposition. Moreover, the characters and general sentiment are very much in Bulwer's manner. The fondness for personifying qualities or passions, and of giving a factitious importance to ordinary conceptions by means of initial capitals, is also one of his strongest peculiarities. The moral of the story, too, is within his range. Had we time, we might confirm our theory by a tolerably strong array of minor corroborations. But we must perforce content ourselves with merely throwing out the suggestion. It can hardly be supposed that the authorship of a poem which ran at once through several editions can long remain a secret. The fate of Junius is a warning to all authors not to preserve the anonymous too strictly.

ART. IX. — *Views afoot; or Europe seen with Knapsack and Staff*. By J. BAYARD TAYLOR. With a Preface by N. P. WILLIS. New York: Wiley & Putnam. 1846. 12mo. pp. 343.

THERE is something which we like well in the title of this unpretending work; it is straightforward and expressive, suiting well with the character in which the writer presents himself to the world. One of our modern writers, who think it refinement to go as far as possible from the Saxon barbarism of former days, might have described it as views seen when he "was being" on foot in Europe; but with all the evident grace of such forms of speech, which are now in high favor, we cannot help thinking that the plain phrase sounds as well, and conveys the meaning better. We say *better*, be-